

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rose Timmer. I am a birthmother who relinquished my daughter in 2005 in the State of Montana. I am writing to give a birthmothers perspective on House Bill 713.

I would like to first address counseling. I received counseling for six months before I placed and have been seeing a grief counselor ever since placement. The adoptive family paid for counseling for the first year (that was all that could be legally enforced). It takes a much longer period to process the loss of a child and become settled with the decision. Most birthparents do not have the financial stability to for this regular monthly expense. Having counseling support for the first year is crucial, but that first birthday is also a monument that restarts the healing process. Without regular counseling for the past three years my mental stability, anger, grief and trauma over this event would be much more apparent in my life and probably control many aspects of it.

I placed my daughter because I wanted her to have a life that I was not able to give her at the time. This drive pushed me through college where I received a degree in December of 2006 because I never wanted to feel like the choice of giving up my child was in vain. Having a future beyond the life changing decision of selflessly giving up my child would have been less challenging with support. There are many birthmothers that do not have any support or the resources to make their lives better. The choice I made could not have been swayed by financial or tangible benefits. This was a voluntary decision that I made; not for myself, or the adoptive family, but for my daughter. There's nothing that you could ever do for me to compensate for the loss of my child.

Providing support to birthparents would aide them in following their goals and dreams after such tragedy rather than giving up because it would be easier. Single parents are provided financial, medical, and educational support for their decision of raising a child without a partner. I believe that often times this decision is not in the best interest of the child, rather the parent because it is easier. Providing birthparents with support could not be considered bribery (as argued by Lutheran Social Services), because if we are offered the same support as single parents than there are no benefits to either decision that are greater than the other.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views and background and for your consideration in this very sensitive matter.

Best Regards,

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